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STATE PARK

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THE PARK

Ferne Clyffe State Park, in Johnson County, is 1 mile southwest of Goreville on Route 37 and about 12 miles south of Marion. The park is in a scenic area of valleys, dells, canyons and brooks.

Prior to 1949 when the State of Illinois began the acquisition of about 75 acres, the area had been operated as a park by Miss Emma Rebman. Gradually the state acquired more acreage as a number of farms were vacated in the 30 years to follow. The park now has a total of 1073 acres.

THE LAKE

In 1960 a 16-acre fishing lake was built near the northeastern foot of Round Bluff. The maximum depth of the lake is 21 feet and the shoreline is about 1 mile. Boats are not permitted on the lake but bank fishing is popular.

HISTORY

In the summer of 1778 George Rogers Clark and his Kentucky "Long Knives" passed through and camped close to the park en route from Fort Massac to Kaskaskia in their conquest of the Illinois Country. On the site of Clark's camp is a marker erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

This section of the state was formerly the winter hunting grounds of the Indians. The last Indians to use it were the Cherokee in 1838-1839 when they moved across southern Illinois and were allowed to hunt north and south of their route. The farthest north they hunted was in Ferne Clyffe.

Miss Emma Rebman, who owned most of the park land for many years, was a former teacher and Johnson County superintendent of schools, and as an Indian student took great pleasure in honoring the Indians in naming various points in the park. These include Little Cheyenne Canyon, Geronimo Gorge, Apache Trail and the eight springs—Mohawk, Pocahontas, Tecumseh, Powhatan, Hiawatha, Black Hawk, Cherokee and Pontiac. Other names used in the park are Job's Coffin, Alligator Cave, Hawks' Cave, Round Bluff, Elephant Head Rock and Castle Rock.



THE NATURAL SCENE

Ferne Clyffe has a central valley from which radiate a number of gorges and canyons. In these there are shady dells, natural cathedrals, domes, brooks, cascades and rills. Several so-called caves are not truly caves but great protruding ledges of rock that make an arched roof.

Hawk's Cave is a sheer cliff of stone so hewn by wind and water that an excavation has been made at its base at least 150 feet long and as many feet in height. The cave has a natural pulpit and excellent acoustics.

The park is a place of ferns and lichens, lovely flowers, birds singing and squirrels chattering at play, interesting rock shapes and a large expanse of forest.

In the fall the beauty is enhanced by the colors of the gum, maple, dogwood and sumac combined with the more somber tones of the oak, ash and other trees.

One of the trees here that is becoming rare is the beech. Its small sweet nuts, along with acorns, formed mast, food of the pioneer's hogs.

FACILITIES

Picnicking: There are several picnic areas throughout the valley and near the lake with tables and park stoves. Playground equipment, toilets and drinking water are also available.

Fishing: The lake contains largemouth bass, channel catfish, redear, bluegill and bullhead. No boats are allowed on the lake.

Camping: There are sites for both tents and trailers. Electricity, a disposal station and a shower building are available. All campers must obtain a permit from the park staff before entering the campground. Youth group camping is available; all groups of over 25 persons need advance permission to enter the park.

Horseback Riding: Horse trails are marked throughout the park. A separate campground for horses and their riders is available.

Trails: There are 5 trails that wind throughout the park for about 7 miles.



FOR YOUR INFORMATION . . .

Admittance will not be granted groups of 25 or more persons to any state park or conservation area unless permission from the park ranger has been secured to use the facilities. It is also required that groups of minors have adequate supervision and that at least one responsible adult accompany each group not exceeding 15 minors. All pets must be on a leash.

Numerous state parks and memorials are within easy access of every part of the state. Lodges, cabins and dining rooms are important features of Illinois Beach, Starved Rock, Pere Marquette, White Pines Forest and Giant City. Reservations for lodging should be made with lodge managers.

All state parks are open the year round. When weather conditions necessitate the closing of park roads during freezing and thawing periods, access to park facilities is by foot only.

For more details about this site, contact Ranger, Box 125, Goreville, 62939, phone 618/995-2411. For information on other Illinois sites, write the Department of Conservation, Information/Education Section, State Office Building, Springfield, 62706.

Park Map





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